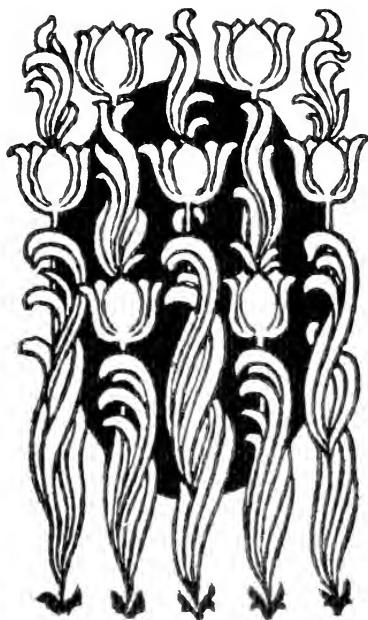


God's Will and My Life



—N. G. BROUGHTON

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God's will and my life



God's Will and My Life

BY

Rev. Len. G. Broughton

Author: "The Revival of a Dead Church,"
"Up From Sin," &c.



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To the "Northfield Conference of Christian Workers" this message is dedicated.

—*The Author.*

GOD'S WILL AND MY LIFE

Finding so much personal comfort in the scriptural truths contained in this little volume, I send it forth to be some blessing to others.

LEN. G. B.

GOD'S WILL AND MY LIFE.

BY REV. LEN. G. BROUGHTON.

Atlanta, Ga.

Some years ago, during the Woman's Conference at Northfield, one Sunday morning, at 11 o'clock, I sat in the front seat in the corner of the village church. The speaker, Robert E. Speer, took for his subject, "Every Human Life a Plan of God." I remember very distinctly the announcement of his subject, though I do not remember his text or anything that he said especially.

When he had announced his subject, my mind instantly went back

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over hills and valleys and rivers and streams until it rested in a little cottage, out in the rural district of central North Carolina, where my eyes first saw the light of day. Then I asked this question: Is it possible, O God, that that morning, December 5, 1865, in that humble spot by the side of that humble little life, the infinite God stood with a chart and compass in His hand for the government of this life? There came to me, as definitely as any words ever came to my ears, this answer: "Yes, it is not only possible, but it is true." I put my head down on the pew in front of me and began to pray: "O Lord, I am sorry I had no one to tell me this truth in those days, and now I pray Thee forgive

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all the mistakes of the past and let me get this morning into the circle of Thy plan, and keep me there, Holy Father, until the day of my death." While I am conscious of many blunders I have made since that day, I am conscious also of the fact that that morning was an epoch in my life. Since then I have seen God with different eyes, and His truth has been to me what it had never been before.

It was just this that the Apostle Paul was speaking about in Colossians 4:12: "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Epaphras was praying

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for certain brethren, that they might be "perfect and complete in the will of God." It is one thing to *do* right; it is another thing to *be* right. Many of us are trying to do right who are not right. All the *right doing* will amount to nothing in the sight of God until we *are* right.

It seems to me that the Apostle Paul has the same idea in Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

There are three classes of Christians. First, the man whose creed is made up of "don'ts." Ask that man to engage in anything that is questionable, and he at once says: "No, I don't do that; I am dead; I

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am crucified with Christ." I wish we had more of that class in our churches.

Then we have another class whose creed is made up of "dos." They are always "hustling." They are never absent from any church meeting, and are constantly filled with good works. And yet, I am sorry to say, it does not take very much persuasion for them to engage in anything that is questionable. They live, but they are not crucified.

Now the other class of people—and I would to God that there were more of them—is a class represented by the apostle when he says: "I am crucified with Christ (I don't); nevertheless I live (I do); *yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*" The

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dos and the *don'ts* are brought together by the *plus sign of the cross*, and there we have a *perfect Christian*.

“PERFECT.”

We must understand that the apostle in using the word perfect is not holding up to these Colossians a hope that they may enter into a state of perfection that admits of no higher development. It is not the perfection of maturity that he is praying for. The Apostle Paul knows too well that they can never attain unto that in this life. He is, however, praying that they may enter into the perfection of state. The difference is illustrated by the apple on the tree. The apple when it is

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half-grown is perfect, providing it is appropriating all of the environment that go to make up perfect fruit; but it has not reached the perfection of maturity until it ripens and falls to the ground. The apostle here is praying that these Christians may live in a *state* of perfection, *appropriating all that God environs them with for the development of their Christian character.*

“COMPLETE.”

Then let us take the next word, “That ye may stand perfect and complete.” The Revised Version translates the word “fully assured.” Thus not only is it possible to enter and live in the will of God, but likewise that we may *know* that we are

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in the will of God. If that is true, it becomes a very interesting question, *Am I living day by day in the will of God?* Not only am I in the will of God in the major things of life, not only am I in the will of God when I am preaching and explaining the Scriptures, or attending conventions, but *am I living day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment, at home and abroad, in the perfect will of God? That is the question.*

HOW MAY WE KNOW HIS WILL.

We may know by coming to the Word of God and finding out, first of all, what is the will of God concerning His people, and then by analyzing our own lives and seeing

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whether or not we conform to the will of God concerning us.

SAVED.

The first thing I will ask you to note, is that *it is the will of God that all men should be saved*. II. Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." That is universalism in so far as its provision is concerned, but it is specialism in so far as its appropriation goes. I used to hear my father tell how, when he was quite young, the United States government, by universal proclamation, offered land

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out West to any young man who would go and settle upon it. My father was anxious to go, but could not make up his mind. While he was debating the question, two of his companions decided to go, and they went. Those two young men settled upon the land and became independently rich. My father gave it up in doubt, remained at home, and became dependently poor. There is a universal proclamation, which became special because all men would not accept it. The atonement of Jesus Christ is broad enough to take in the universe of God. Never has there been a soul that has not had a chance at salvation in the purpose of God, but how

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sad it is that so few have accepted this provision and have been saved.

Are we standing in perfect harmony with this part of the will of God? Do we believe that it is the will of God that every man should be saved? It is easy to think that God wills the salvation of our church and of our neighbors, and of good, respectable people, but has the thought taken possession of God, that the vilest possession of us as it has taken sinner, the gutter snipe, is just as eagerly sought by God as the man who lives in the mansion? Until that thought has taken possession of us, so that we are willing to live that way, and to work that way, we are not in the will of God. Do you

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not think that the world sees how the church makes a division among men? They see that we are more anxious about the salvation of some people than we are others; they see us running after the rich, and the intelligent, and the refined, to the neglect of the poor, and the outcast. Hence the world does not respect our religion. Oh, it is easy to bring sinners to Christ when the sinner becomes convinced that it is his soul that we are after and not his wealth.

SANCTIFIED

Take the next step. It is the will of God *that the saints should be sanctified*. I. Thessalonians 4:3,7: "*For this is the will of God, even your sanctification. For God hath*

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not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." Let us not be frightened here. I know how prejudiced we are upon this subject of sanctification, and yet there is nothing taught in the Bible any more definitely than the doctrine of sanctification.

What are we to understand by this word "sanctify?" It means two things, *to cleanse* and *to set apart*. It is the will of God that we shall be clean. Is there any man in this world who doubts that? Would you be satisfied to live with an unclean companion? Is God any less satisfied to live with an unclean soul? Of course it is the will of God that we should be clean.

It is also the will of God that we

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should be separate, set apart. Surely there is not one who would say that God does not will the separation of His people from sin and from sinful companions. Is there a true wife who would be satisfied to live with a husband not separated unto herself? Never. Of course it is the will of God that we should live a separate life, holy unto Him.

Now, if this is the will of God, it is possible for us to attain it. In the purpose of God we are sanctified, we are cleahsed; we are separated the moment that we are regenerated. But though this be true of us in the purpose of God, it is not true of us in our experience. We have the birthright, but we have not claimed it; and what we need is to

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get down humbly before Him and by faith appropriate what He has provided for us.

DELIVERED.

We come to the next step. It is the will of God that we *shall be delivered from the power of sin*. I Corinthians 10:13. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape." How precious this truth is to my heart. Temptation is not an uncommon thing. God has not willed to keep us from temptation, but, blessed be

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His name, He does will to keep us from being mastered by it.

But when we are tempted, then what? Fix your eyes upon Jesus. He says He hath provided for *every* temptation, not only the great temptations, not the little ones simply, but for every temptation He has provided a way of escape. There is no reason in the world, as I read the Scriptures, why any Christian should yield to temptation. Christ has made the way of escape. If His word be true, there is always a remedy if we will only look up and obtain the light and the strength. So when we come to face our temptation, let us face our Christ, and in His strength we may become

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strong, but in our strength we are ever weak and feeble.

FILLED.

Let us take another step. It is the will of God *that we should receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.* Luke 11:13: "How much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." Jesus Christ wills that every man, that every woman, that every child redeemed by His blood should receive the *gift* of the Holy Spirit. It may not be the power to preach, or to teach, or become a missionary, or to evangelize, or to write books or edit papers, but *He wills to equip every saved soul with the gift of power for the life that He desires*

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that soul to live. The Holy Spirit is in charge of the work of extending the kingdom of God on earth, and when a man believes this and surrenders his life to the Holy Spirit as the Master of the situation, that he may be guided and directed and instructed and empowered by Him, that moment he receives the *gift of the Holy Spirit*. How important. First, in order that we comprehend "the Word of Life."

I shall never forget a visit into Luray Cave, Virginia. As I went in I was given a candle, which was to furnish light. When we got in the midst of stalactites and stalagmites I was disappointed. They were pretty, but not half so pretty as I expected. Finally, my guide

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took from his pocket a roll of magnesium ribbon and asked me to give him my candle, which I did. He then touched the ribbon to it, and such a light as I have never seen flashed out through the cave. My! stalactites and stalagmites such as I never dreamed of before were before me. They had been there all the time. I had not been able to see them. So in the comprehension of the Word of God. We fail, because we rely too much on the candle-light of reason. God wants us to offer up our minds to be touched by His Spirit. Then the light flashes and that which we have never seen is brought plain.

Again, we need the Spirit for power in service. Once I saw an

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electric car loaded with passengers come to a standstill about half way up a hill. The motorman had great difficulty in keeping it from running backwards. Somebody asked what was the matter, and the conductor said "the trolley had jumped the tram wire." How much like the church. The majority of us preachers are working more on the back brakes than anything else. We have given up the standstill situation. All we now hope for is to keep from running backward. There is no connection between the tram wire of power and our work.

GUIDED.

Now, take one further step. It is the will of God *that we should be*

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guided in daily life. This is perhaps more practical than anything else. Psalm 32:8: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way that thou shouldst go." Is not that a blessed promise? How we are confronted by the perplexities of life. But, blessed be God, there is a way of light. We may have to wait to see it, but the waiting pays. Sometimes we get the worst of it by not waiting. Here is a man confronted with a certain proposition. He does not know whether to accept this proposition or not. It looks dark both ways. And after a while he says: "I cannot wait any longer for God to tell me; I must take matters in my own hands and do the best I can." Every time we do that we

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come out worse. We can afford to wait if we are waiting on God.

But does God promise to guide every one of us? Under certain conditions He does. Solomon tells us whom God proposes to guide. Proverbs 3:6: "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." *God will guide every one who acknowledges Him.*

You recall the story of Mendelssohn and the young musician who refused to let him try the cathedral organ. But when the master hand had once touched the keys, how ashamed the novice was of his own bungling work. My brethren, at best we are making but little harmony with our lives, at best we are living in the midst of discord; we

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know very little about how to play on the keyboard of life. God never intended that we should play it. This instrument, this divine instrument, with these keys, was made for the fingers of God. Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, God the Father, the triune God, comes close to us and says, "Child of My creation, leave off trying to control your own life's music. Let my fingers play on the keyboard of your life. You must be tired of this discord, of this confusion of sounds that you think, perhaps, may be so good, but as I see it from heaven it is most miserable discord. Let me have the keyboard." What answer shall we make? Are we saying, "No, I want to do the best I can with it. I cannot sur-

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render. I am afraid thou wilt not make the music that I like." O my God, help us to leave the keyboard and let the Holy Spirit come and take His seat, let His fingers touch the keys and His melody dominate our life. *This is life in "the will of God."*

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